

Open-Air Schools.

The Education Committee of the London County Council has again sanctioned the open air schools, and indeed will increase them from three to four. Comparing the cost of the open air schools with ordinary schools it will be found that last year the open-air schools cost £23 a head, as against £6 18s. for the ordinary schools. The item of £23 is swollen this year by the hire and purchase of sheds and stock for 125 children during the coming year. As against these amounts the Board of Education pay in grants £4 10s. for the open-air schools, and £1 19s. 6d. in the ordinary schools.

In this connection, the following article on "The School of Outdoor Life for Tuberculous Children," by Mr. Walter E. Kruesi, of Boston, U.S.A., which has just appeared in *Charities*, may be studied with advantage:—

THE SCHOOL OF OUTDOOR LIFE FOR TUBERCULOUS CHILDREN.

The School of Outdoor Life for Tuberculous Children at Parker Hill, Boston, has made such an impression of its value that it is being carried on through the winter jointly by the Boston Association for the Relief and Control of Tuberculosis, which organised it, and the Boston School Board. The latter body is furnishing the teaching force, schoolroom equipment, and an especially adapted building for storm shelter and headquarters. The association furnishes the teacher's assistant, house-keeping teacher, cook, janitor, special equipment, food, and sees that the children are properly clothed. The home conditions are supervised jointly. The School Board has become so interested in the number and conditions of tuberculous children under its charge, that it has appointed a special committee to investigate these matters. It is expected that a sufficient appropriation will follow to pay for a general examination by specialists.

Through this outdoor school the children, instead of falling further behind their grades, will get a good education, while the restoration of their health is in progress. The school exercises and work of the day will continue to be developed on lines dictated by the physical needs of the children. The parts which are specified and formal will come before the free time, in order that fatigue shall not limit the programme, but only regulate the intensity of the free action. They will be carried on in the open air except during storms. The little desks and chairs will be on individual platforms of light construction. Blankets, with pockets for the feet and legs, will be provided

where they are necessary. The children have been barefooted all summer, and it is planned that they be provided with soft functioning shoes when protection from cold is necessary. The whole teaching method will really be that of Pestalozzi: to have all the training and education natural and based on physical experiences.

Taking tuberculous children, and those who are seriously threatened with tuberculosis, out of the ordinary school buildings and the pressure of crowded classes, into the sunlight and open air for education, and the restoration and building up of their health, would seem to be a very reasonable project. In Germany, Switzerland, England, and other European countries, it has been practised for ten years or more, until such provision is fast becoming general. In America, the first fresh air school was established last fall in Providence, R. I. An article describing this school was printed in *Charities and the Commons* of April 18. It finished its year very successfully, and its continuance was a matter of course. That school is conducted indoors, but with one side wall removed, so that there is certainty of constant fresh air. The normal school hours prevail, and there is as yet no special training, nourishment, or adaptation of the curriculum.

The first real outdoor school in America, however, was that started on the top of Parker Hill last July. This school was designed for the tuberculous children found by the examination of 1,250 of the younger members of families in which there was already known to be a case of tuberculosis. Some of them had already been sent for short periods to convalescent homes, for country week excursions and visits, and a few had had more or less treatment in hospitals for different troubles which really expressed the same fundamental unhealthy condition.

It was called the School of Outdoor Life, and was intended to give a group of tuberculous children first, fresh air; second, a sufficiency of the best food adapted for them; and third, a natural hygienic life. The school was equipped with a lean-to kitchen and pantry, two dressing-rooms and closets, and a large shower bath. In connection there was a large tent used as a dining-room and as a shelter during storms. The camp was located in an old orchard, the shade of whose trees furnished a pleasant resting place. Hammocks, reclining chairs, and large hay pillows, made by the children themselves, together with blankets for use on colder days, and tents equipped with beds for emergencies completed the equipment.

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